

FOR RELEASE

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Twelve First-Team All-PFL returnees highlight Preseason All-PFL Team

ST. LOUIS – Thirty-one student-athletes were named to the 2018 Preseason All-Pioneer Football League Team as selected by the league's head coaches and announced Monday.

The PFL will announce its preseason coaches' poll Tuesday.

Returning players who were selected to the league's 2017 All-PFL Teams were placed automatically on the 2018 Preseason All-PFL team in order of voting. Twelve First-Team All-PFL honorees return for the 2017 season. In addition, 11 Second-Team All-PFL selections and eight honorable mention recipients join the 2017 preseason squad.

San Diego quarterback Anthony Lawrence, a two-time First-Team All-PFL selection, returns to lead the PFL's preseason offensive unit. He finished 2017 ranked among the FCS Top 10 in passing touchdowns (3rd, 33), passing efficiency (5th, 163.3) and completion percentage (8th, 65.5). Lawrence led San Diego to the second round of the FCS Playoffs for a second consecutive year.

The league's wide receiver corps is led by a quartet of seniors, including returning first-team selections Butler's Pace Temple and Marist's Juston Christian as well as Drake's Steve Doran and Morehead State's Jarin Higginbotham, who were each second-team All-PFL picks last season. Christian is a three-time First-Team All-PFL pick, posted 1,096 receiving yards last season and enters 2017 with 2,914 career receiving yards. Temple (1,075) and Higginbotham (974) and Doran (790), join Christian as the league's top four returning receivers in total receiving yards. Joining the receivers is Dayton's Adam Trautman, who is the PFL's preseason choice at tight end after amassing 537 receiving yards last season.

A pair of returning First-Team All-PFL picks also return at running back in Davidson's Wesley Dugger and Dayton's Tucker Yinger. Both athletes rushed for more than 1,000 yards in 2017 with Dugger finished the season ranked 10th nationally in both rushing yards (1,131) and rushing yards per game (102.8). Yinger was not far behind with his 1,088 rushing yards ranked 15th nationally.

San Diego's Daniel Cooney, a Preseason All-America choice, leads the league's Preseason All-PFL offensive line and is the only First-Team All-PFL returnee to the unit. Butler's Bobby Jensen and Dakota Sneed, Dayton's Ben Gauthier, Drake's Jordan Lewinsky, and Valparaiso's Tom Schofield also highlight the preseason offensive line group.

On the defensive line, Drake's Nathan Clayberg returns after garnering First-Team All-PFL honors following a 44-tackle campaign. Marist's Eddie Zinn-Turner notched 49 tackles and two forced fumbles in a Second-Team All-PFL campaign last season. Dayton's Nick Surges (49 tackles) and San Diego's Connor Spencer (24 tackles, 5 TFL) return to fill out the defensive line.

Marist's Willie Barrett – a First-Team All-PFL honoree last season – returns to lead the PFL's linebackers corps after a 53-tackle campaign that saw him post 9.5 tackles for loss. Jacksonville's Trevor Tufano (63 tackles, 4.5 TFL) and Caysaun Wakeley (70 tackles, 7.5 TFL) also return as does Valparaiso's Nick Turner (101 tackles, 8.0 TFL).

The PFL's defensive backfield is led by returning First-Team All-PFL pick Sean Lynch, of Drake, who posted 72 tackles and two interceptions last season. Stetson's JJ Henderson (71 tackles, 11 pass break ups) returns after second-team honors while Dayton's David Leisring (86 tackles, four interceptions) and Marist's Wes Beans (71 tackles, four pass break ups) round out the defensive back unit.

Two returning First-Team All-PFL choices return to anchor the league's special teams unit. Butler's Drew Bevelhimer was a first-team choice at placekicker after connecting on 16 of his 21 field goal attempts and 30 of his 32 PATs. Dayton punter Sean Smith averaged 42.7 yards per punt and placed 24 of his 51 punts inside the 20-yard line en route to his third First-Team All-PFL selection. Valparaiso return specialist Bailey Gessinger (771 combined kick return yards) and Dayton long snapper Matt Tunnacliffe also were named to the preseason special teams unit.

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2018 Preseason All-Pioneer Football League Team

(as selected by PFL head coaches)

Pos.	Player	School	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Hometown
OFFENSE (Ties in voting: WR)						
WR	Pace Temple (1)	Butler	6-2	200	Sr.	Geneva, Ill.
WR	Steven Doran (2)	Drake	6-3	212	Sr.	Germantown, Wis.
WR	Juston Christian (1)	Marist	6-0	186	Sr.	Owings Mills, Md.
WR	Jarin Higginbotham (2)	Morehead State	6-0	195	RSr.	Liberty Township, Ohio.
QB	Anthony Lawrence (1)	San Diego	6-1	195	RSr.	La Mesa, Calif.
TE	Adam Trautman (2)	Dayton	6-1	225	RSr.	Williamsburg, Mich.
RB	Wesley Dugger (1)	Davidson	6-0	192	So.	Cincinnati, Ohio
RB	Tucker Yinger (1)	Dayton	6-0	191	RSr.	Columbus, Ohio
FB	Zach Nelson (1)	San Diego	6-2	240	RJr.	Danville, Calif.
OL	Bobby Jensen (H)	Butler	6-4	290	RSr.	Plainfield, Ind.
OL	Dakota Sneed (H)	Butler	6-3	285	RSr.	Edinburgh, Ind.
OL	Ben Gauthier (2)	Dayton	6-2	275	Sr.	Avon, Ohio
OL	Jordan Lewinsky (2)	Drake	6-5	290	RSr.	Mequon, Wis.
OL	Daniel Cooney (1)	San Diego	6-8	315	RSr.	Western Springs, Ill.
OL	Tom Schofield (2)	Valparaiso	6-3	285	Sr.	Chicago, Ill.
DEFENSE						
DL	Nick Surges (H)	Dayton	6-3	237	RSr.	Naperville, Ill.
DL	Nathan Clayberg (1)	Drake	6-4	282	RSr.	Pella, Iowa
DL	Eddie Zinn-Turner (2)	Marist	6-1	298	RJr.	Malvern, Ohio
DL	Connor Spencer (H)	San Diego	6-3	285	RSr.	Boulder, Colo.
LB	Caysaun Wakeley (H)	Jacksonville	5-11	200	Jr.	Alachua, Fla.
LB	Trevor Tufano (2)	Jacksonville	5-11	210	Jr.	New Smyrna Beach, Fla.
LB	Willie Barrett (1)	Marist	5-11	227	RSr.	Holiday, Fla.
LB	Nick Turner (2)	Valparaiso	6-1	225	Sr.	Gurnee, Ill.
DB	David Leisring (H)	Dayton	6-1	190	Sr.	Cincinnati, Ohio
DB	Sean Lynch (1)	Drake	5-9	181	RSr.	Hawthorn Woods, Ill.
DB	Wes Beans (H)	Marist	5-10	192	RSr.	New Oxford, Pa.
DB	JJ Henderson (2)	Stetson	5-10	161	RSo.	Tampa, Fla.
SPECIAL TEAMS						
PK	Drew Bevelhimer (1)	Butler	6-1	185	Jr.	Indianapolis, Ind.
P	Sean Smith (1)	Dayton	6-4	222	Sr.	Avondale, Pa.
RS	Bailey Gessinger (2)	Valparaiso	5-10	165	Jr.	Napanee, Ind.
LS	Matt Tunnacliffe (H)	Dayton	6-3	200	Sr.	West Chester, Ohio

Notes in parentheses: 1-was a first-team selection in 2017, 2-was a second-team selection in 2017, H-was a honorable mention selection in 2017.